

## PRESENT SIMPLE

We use the **Present Simple**:

- to talk about things that happen repeatedly (routines, habits),

*I often **finish** school at 4.30.*

*Adam **visits** his grandparents every Tuesday.*

- to talk about things that are always true (general truths),

*Air pressure **decreases** with height.*

*Water **boils** at 100°C.*

- with verbs that express emotions (*hate, like, love*), activities of the mind (*believe, know, need, remember, seem, think, understand, want*) or senses (*feel, hear, see*). These are called stative or state verbs (see below).

*He **doesn't want** to go there.*

*I **need** your help with packing.*

**TIME EXPRESSIONS** (TIME ADVERBIALS) USED WITH THE PRESENT SIMPLE:

*always, regularly, usually, often, sometimes, rarely, seldom, hardly ever, never, every day/week/month, once/twice/three times a week/month.*

## PRESENT CONTINUOUS

We use the **Present Continuous**:

- to talk about things that are happening now (at the time of speaking) or around the time when we speak,

*She's **taking** a shower **now**. (at the moment of speaking)*

*They're **studying** Ancient Greece **this semester**.*

*(around the moment of speaking, not necessarily right now)*

- to express current changes.

*More and more young women **are getting** married at later ages nowadays.*

*The number of people studying Chinese **is growing** rapidly.*

**TIME EXPRESSIONS** (TIME ADVERBIALS) USED WITH THE PRESENT CONTINUOUS:

*at the moment, (right) now, today, this morning/afternoon, this year, these days, at present.*

### STATIVE VERBS

- describe states and are not normally used in the Present Continuous (they don't take *-ing* form), even if they refer to things or states happening at the moment of speaking.

*Do you **understand** what she means?*

*I **don't believe** you.*

Some state verbs can be used both in the Present Simple and the Present Continuous tense depending on what they refer to:

*I **think** she's a very pretty girl. (think here means believe and refers to a state)*

*I'm **thinking** about my new job. (think here means consider and refers to an activity)*

### DYNAMIC VERBS

- describe activities and can be used in the Present Simple and the Present Continuous tense.

*I often **watch** TV. (a habit)*

*I'm **watching** a western now. (at the moment of speaking)*

## HAVE

The verb **have** can be used in the Present Simple and the Present Continuous tense.

- When **have** means *possess*, it refers to a state and can only be used in the Present Simple.

*I **have got** a new car. (have = possess)*

*She **has** two sisters.*

- When **have** refers to an activity (e.g. *have a bath, have a party, have a good time*), it can be used in the Present Simple and the Present Continuous.

*On Saturdays we usually **have** lunch at home. (have = eat, a routine)*

*I can't talk now. We **are just having** lunch. (have = eat, at the moment of speaking)*

## PAST SIMPLE

We use the **Past Simple**:

- to talk about actions or situations which happened and finished in the past,  
*He **sold** his car yesterday.*  
*During our last class we **asked** him many questions.*
- to talk about actions/events which happened in the past one after another (we often use the Past Simple in stories).  
*Ann **finished** her homework and **went** to visit her friend.*  
*I **switched off** the computer and **locked** the door.*

**TIME EXPRESSIONS** (TIME ADVERBIALS) USED WITH THE PAST SIMPLE:

*yesterday (morning/evening), last (year/month/week/Friday/night), in (January/1966/the 1970s), (two days/a week/ten years) ago, when I was (12/young), one (day/morning)*

## PAST CONTINUOUS

We use the **Past Continuous**:

- to describe actions in progress at a certain time in the past,  
*They **were waiting** for us in front of the cinema.*  
*At midnight I **was** still **tossing** and **turning** in my bed.*
- to talk about temporary situations or habits in the past,  
*At that time Bethany **was studying** law at Cambridge.*  
***Were** you **living** on your own when you were a student?*
- to talk about actions or situations in the past during which shorter events happened (for these we use the Past Simple).

*Mark and Ruth **were dancing** when I came in.*

*Somebody knocked on the door while I **was arguing** with my sister.*

For **complete finished states or actions**, we normally use the Past Simple, and not the Past Continuous, even if these events happened repeatedly or lasted for a longer time.

*Even if she was in a bad mood, she **tried** (NOT ~~was trying~~) to joke with us.*

*We **went** (NOT ~~were going~~) to the park every day last week.*

## PAST PERFECT

We use the **Past Perfect**:

- when we talk about the past events in non-chronological order (the Past Perfect is used to express an event or situation which happened before other past events expressed in the Past Simple).  
*On the way to school I remembered that I **had left** my history book at home. (the second event happened before the first = first I left the book, then I remembered)*  
*When we got home, everybody **had** already **gone** to sleep. (the second event happened before the first = first everybody went to sleep, then we got home)*

## USED TO

We use **used to**:

- to talk about states (e.g. *be, have, believe, like*) and actions which were true or happened regularly in the past, but are not true or don't happen regularly now.

*Tom **used to** read a lot. (he doesn't do it any more or doesn't read that much now)*

*You **didn't use to** be so talkative. (now it's different = you're talkative now)*

When we talk about states and actions which did not happen regularly or we don't want to emphasize a change in relation to the past, we use the Past Simple.

*Once I **slipped** on a banana skin. (it happened only once, not regularly)*

*She **earned** a lot of money. (we don't know if now she still earns a lot)*

The structure **used to** refers only to past habits. We cannot use it for habits or actions happening regularly in the present. They are expressed by the Present Simple:

*I **used to play** tennis on Mondays. (past habit)*

*I **play** (NOT ~~uses to play~~) tennis on Mondays. (present habit)*



## PRESENT PERFECT SIMPLE

We use the **Present Perfect Simple** to talk about activities and events:

- which happened not long ago and have results/consequences now,  
*I **have passed** my biology exam! (and that's why I'm so happy now)*  
*She **has lost** her student ID card. (and that's why she needs a new one)*  
*They **have won** a lot of money. (and that's why they can afford to buy a new house)*
- which happened in the past, but we don't know or we are not interested in when exactly they happened.  
*She **has been** to Paris three times. (in her life, it doesn't matter when exactly)*  
*I **have taken** part in many international competitions. (it doesn't matter when)*  
*Robert **has studied** international relations. (it is not important when he did it)*

We often use the **Present Perfect Simple** with the time adverbials *already*, *just* and *yet*.

- **already** and **just** are used in affirmative sentences,  
*She's **already** done her homework.*  
*I **have just** finished cooking.*
- **ever** is used in questions,  
*Have you **ever** been to England?*  
*Has Dave **ever** called you back?*
- **yet** is used in negative sentences and questions.  
*I **haven't** told him **yet**.*  
*Have you **prepared** your presentation **yet**?*

## PRESENT PERFECT CONTINUOUS

We use the **Present Perfect Continuous** to talk about activities:

- which started in the past and continue up to now,  
*My mother **has been teaching** in this school since 2005. (she's still teaching in this school)*  
*We **have been learning** Spanish for three years. (we're still learning it)*
- from the recent past which have results/consequences in the present.  
*I **feel** exhausted. I **have been working** in the garden all day. (that's why I'm so tired)*  
*Look at them! I'm sure they **have been arguing**. (that's why they look angrily at each other)*

We use **since** and **for** to answer the question *How long ...?*

*How long have you been skiing? → **Since** last winter.*

*How long has she known Claire? → **For** four years.*

We use **since** to talk about the moment (a point in time) when the activity started.

***since** (1987/Tuesday/last winter/his birthday/yesterday)*

We use **for** to talk about the period of time/the length of the time the activity has taken.

***for** (five minutes/two months/most of my life/a long time/ages)*

We use Present Perfect Simple to focus on the result of an activity (especially when answering the question *How much?* or *How many?*). We use the Present Perfect Continuous to focus on the activity itself (especially when answering the question *How long?*)

*I've **read** five articles about global warming. (focus on the result of activity – five articles)*

*I've **been reading** a lot about global warming recently. (focus on the activity itself – reading)*

*They **have played** three matches. (How many? → three matches)*

*They **have been playing** all evening. (How long? → all evening)*

With stative verbs (e.g. *know*, *have*, *understand*, *believe*, *like*) we can only use the Present Perfect Simple.

*I **have known** him for three years.*

*She's **had** this watch since March.*

*My parents **have** always **liked** coffee.*

## FUTURE SIMPLE

We use **will/won't + infinitive** without *to*:

- to express a prediction based on opinions, beliefs or experience,

*I'm sure your German teacher **will be** disappointed that you've decided not to study German at university after all. (prediction based on my belief)*

*They **will come** late, as always. (prediction based on my experience – they always come late)*

- to talk about a decision made at the moment of speaking,

*I'll **open** the door. (decision made at the moment of speaking)*

*Ok, I'll **tell** you everything. (decision made at the moment of speaking)*

- to express a promise or intention.

*I'll **help** you if you want.*

*I'll **never leave** you.*

## FUTURE CONTINUOUS

We use **will/won't + be + ing**:

- to talk about activities which will be in progress at a certain time in the future,

*I **will be driving** to Riga at 10 o'clock tonight.*

***Will** you still **be working** on your essay at 11 p.m.?*

- to talk about future events which are very likely to happen or activities which happen as a routine,

*They'll **be staying** with their family. (they always do that)*

*I'll **be going** to the supermarket on Saturday so I can pick up some charcoal for the barbecue.*

*(on Saturdays at that time I usually go to the supermarket)*

- to ask about people's plans when we want something or want someone to do something.

***Will** you **be using** your computer today? (because I'd like to work on it)*

***Will** you **be going** to the town centre tomorrow? (because I'd like you to give me a lift)*

### STATIVE VERBS

Stative verbs (*be, know, believe, forget, like, want*) do not take *-ing*.

*Will you **be travelling** on your own, or **will you want to go** with some friends?*

*This time tomorrow I **will know** the exam results.*

## BE GOING TO

We use **be going to**:

- to talk about plans and intentions which may still change,

*Barbara **is going to become** a scientist. (but it may change)*

*They **are going to spend** the weekend at home. (but they still might change their plans)*

- to express a prediction based on something we know or can observe now.

*It's **going to be** a long day for me. (I know how many things I need to do)*

*Look at this boy! He **is going to fall off** the horse! (I can see that the horse has tripped over a stone)*

## PRESENT CONTINUOUS

We use the **Present Continuous**:

- to talk about future events we have already arranged. We often specify the date, time and/or the place.

*They **are flying** to New York on Monday. (they have already bought the tickets)*

*I can't come tomorrow. I'm **studying** for my history exam with Robert. (we've already arranged to study together tomorrow)*

## PRESENT SIMPLE

We use the **Present Simple**:

- when we talk about future events and refer to timetables, schedules, routines, dates, etc.

*My train tomorrow **leaves** at 3.30 p.m.*

*Easter **falls** at the end of March next year.*